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The Core Program and Services in Nova Scotia Schools

A Proposal for Discussion Purposes

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The Core Program and Services in Nova Scotia Schools

The Minister of Education has released, for discussion purposes, the attached statement of a proposed core program and services for the public schools of Nova Scotia. This statement, prepared by Department of Education staff, is intended to serve as a basis for the discussions that will take place across the province over the coming months. To assist in gathering the views of Nova Scotians, a series of regional meetings will be held in the fall of 1991.

In this proposal "core program and services" or simply "core" means the offerings that must be provided by all school boards. The core definition is not limiting: school boards may offer more than the core if they wish to do so and have the resources. The core – what the board must offer – is different from what students are required to take. For example, the proposed core would require boards to offer grade 10 biology in every high school, but this does not mean that biology would be a compulsory subject for all grade 10 students.

A satisfactory description of the core is needed to ensure all Nova Scotian young people have the opportunity to receive the education they need to become successful, contributing members of society. In an increasingly technological and globally interdependent world, the core must be designed to develop skills in communication, higher level thinking and problem solving.

The core, as outlined in the attached document, has been developed to include the components necessary to reach this goal. In broad, general terms, the components of the proposed core are listed below. In addition to these components, guidance and library services must be provided.

Language Arts. An ability to speak, listen, write and read effectively is a major contributor to success in school and throughout life.

Mathematics. Expectations of our changing society and the need to solve complex problems demand that all students have an opportunity to become mathematically literate through their study of mathematics as problem solving, communication, reasoning and making connections with the real world.

Social Studies. The insights provided by the social studies are required to understand and make sound judgments on a wide range of local, national and international issues.

Science. The skills, attitudes, knowledge and ways of thinking in science provide students with the tools required for understanding the natural environment and making informed decisions in a society increasingly dependent on scientific knowledge.

French. Canada's status as an officially bilingual country implies that students should have a knowledge of both languages and cultures.

Physical Education. A physically active lifestyle not only promotes physical health, but also enhances the general quality and enjoyment of life.

Fine Arts. Study of the fine arts enriches one's personal life, develops habits of disciplined effort, stimulates creative thought, and promotes flexible ways of searching for solutions to problems.

Health and Family Studies. Students need the knowledge and understanding required to maintain good physical, social and emotional health, and must develop the skills necessary to cope with complex social issues.

Technology. Students need to use technology to solve problems, and to investigate social and ethical issues related to technology.

Special Education. Special education is necessary to make it possible for all students to receive an education commensurate with their strengths and needs.

All Nova Scotians interested in education are invited to contribute to the forthcoming discussions on the proposed core.

Proposed Core Program and Services for Nova Scotia Public Schools

The core program for Nova Scotia public schools is the program that must be offered by all school boards and be available to students, beginning in September 1992. The Department of Education will continue to respond to changing needs by reviewing the public school program to ensure for all students a rich learning environment that will prepare them for tomorrow's world. For example, it is expected that students at all levels will participate in a variety of learning experiences involving print and non-print media, and will have opportunities to explore technology and environmental issues. Other changes will result from phasing in the recommendations of the *Report of the Minister's Advisory Committee on the Public School Program*.

In the following outline, the proposed core for elementary, junior high and senior high is presented, along with a note on the differences between what school boards must offer under current regulations and what they would be required to offer under the proposed core. The elementary program as outlined in existing regulations was felt to be satisfactory. At the junior and senior high levels, however, significant additions to existing requirements have been proposed.

PROPOSED CORE FOR GRADES P – 6

*1. Language Arts
2. Mathematics
3. Social Studies
4. Science
5. French (second language for Grades 4-6 only)
6. Physical Education
7. Art
8. Music
9. Health

In addition to the above, special education will continue to be offered as part of the core program, using specific purpose funding.

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*In Acadian schools French Language Arts must be offered at all levels P-6 and English Language Arts must be offered beginning in grade 3.

Current required offerings under existing regulations: Education regulations currently require school boards to offer the program in grades P-6 as outlined above.

PROPOSED CORE FOR GRADES 7 – 9

*1. Language Arts
2. Mathematics
3. Social Studies
4. Science
#5. French (Second Language)
6. Physical Education
7. Personal Development and Relationships and Health
8. Industrial Arts Technology
9. Family Studies
10. Fine Arts (Music or Art or Drama)

In addition to the above, special education will continue to be offered as part of the core program, using specific purpose funding.

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*In Acadian Schools, French Language Arts must be offered at grades 7-9.

#In Acadian Schools, English Language Arts must be offered at grades 7-9.

Current required offerings under existing regulations: Education regulations currently require school boards to offer English, mathematics, social studies, science, French, and physical education to junior high school students.

PROPOSED CORE FOR GRADES 10 – 12

The following are suggested core courses to be offered in every school teaching grades 10 to 12.

1. English Language Arts (plus French Language Arts in Acadian Schools) (10, 11, 12)
2. Mathematics (10, 11, 12)
3. History (10, 11, 12)
4. Geography (at least two of 10, 11, 12)
5. Biology (10, 12)
6. Chemistry (11, 12)
7. Physics (11, 12)
8. French (Second Language) (10, 11, 12)
9. Fine Arts – Drama or Art or Music (10 or 11 or 12)
10. One of Economics, Law, Co-operative Education or entrepreneurial related courses (11 or 12)
11. One of Computer Related Studies, word processing or other technology related courses (10 or 11 or 12)
12. Physical Education (10 or 11 or 12)

In addition to the above, special education will continue to be offered as part of the core program, using specific purpose funding.

Courses in the following programs, 13 to 17, must be offered by each school board but not necessarily in every school.

13. Industrial Arts Technology
14. Family Studies
15. Business Education
16. Alternative Education (Recommendations about this program are being prepared by a task force.)
17. Physical Science (10). This course will be phased out as Integrated Science (10) is developed and implemented as part of the revision of the science program.

Current required offerings under existing regulations: Education regulations currently require school boards to offer English, French, science, social studies, and mathematics to senior high school students.

SERVICES

Guidance and school library services are integral parts of the core program from grades Primary to 12.

Guidance

Guidance is an essential part of the education of all Nova Scotian students. While the family has the primary responsibility for students' personal and social growth, schools also have a significant role in these areas. Schools also have a responsibility for the career development and educational planning for students, as well as a responsibility for the students' personal, social, education and career development is met primarily through a planned, comprehensive guidance program delivered by school counsellors, teachers, and administrators.

In addition schools should address the larger social issues that affect the daily lives of their students. Schools should provide students with guidance and counselling services, to help them make informed and wise personal and career decisions and cope with crises in their lives.

School Library

The school library is an integral component of the educational program, and its goals are supportive of the educational program which it serves. The education program gives direction to the school library service. Teachers and library staff share the responsibility for designing and implementing an effective program which aligns school library services with the curricular and personal needs of the students.

The Department of Education intends that school library services will be more fully developed over the next number of years.